

## THE SLEUTHS

Snuffing out of a human being like the erasure from a blackboard.

By O. Henry

In the Big City a man will disappear with the suddenness and completeness of the flame of a candle that is blown out. All the agencies of inquisition—the hounds of the trail, the sleuths of the city's labyrinthine, the closet detectives of theory and induction—will be invoked to the search. Most often the man's face will be seen no more. Sometimes he will reappear in Sheboygan or in the wilds of Terra Haute, calling himself one of the synonyms of "Smith," and without memory of events up to a certain time, including his grocer's bill. Sometimes it will be found, after dragging the rivers, and polling the restaurants to see if he may be waiting for a well-dressed sirloin, that he has moved back.

This snuffing out of a human being like the erasure of a chalk man from a blackboard is one of the most impressive themes in dramatic literature.

The case of Mary Snyder, in point, should not be without interest. A man of middle age, of the name of Meeks, came from the West to New York to find his sister, Mrs. Mary Snyder, a widow, aged 52, who had been living for a year in a tenement house in a crowded neighborhood.

At her address he was told that Mary Snyder had moved away longer than a month before. No one could tell him her new address.

On coming out Mr. Meeks addressed a policeman who was standing on the corner, and explained his mission.

"My sister is very poor," he said, "and I am anxious to find her. I have recently made quite a lot of money in a lead mine, and I want her to share my prosperity. There is no use in advertising her, because she cannot read."

The policeman pulled his mustache and looked thoughtful and mighty that Meeks could almost feel the joyful tears of his sister Mary dropping upon his bright blue tie.

He went down in the Canal street neighborhood, said the policeman, "and get a job drivin' the biggest dray you can find. There's old women always gettin' knocked over by drays down there. You might see 'er among 'em. If you don't want to do that you better go 'round to headquarters and get 'em to put a ny cop on the case."

At police headquarters Meeks received ready assistance. A general alarm was sent out, and copies of a photograph of Mary Snyder, that her brother had been distributed among the stations. In Mulberry street the chief assigned Detective Mullins to the case.

"This is not a very difficult case to unravel. Shave off your whiskers, fill your pockets with good cigars, and meet me in the cafe of the Waldorf at 3 o'clock this afternoon."

Meeks obeyed. He found Mullins there. They had a bottle of wine, while the detective asked questions concerning the missing woman.

"Now," said Mullins, "New York is a big city, but we've got the detective business systematized. There are two ways we can go about finding your sister. We will try one of 'em first. You say she's 52?"

"A little past," said Meeks.

The detective conducted the Westerner to a branch advertising office of one of the largest dailies. There he wrote the following "ad" and submitted it to Meeks:

"Wanted, at once—one hundred attractive chorus girls for a new musical comedy. Apply all day at No. 100 Broadway."

Meeks was indignant.

"This is a poor, hard-working, elderly woman. I do not see what aid an advertisement of this kind would be toward finding her."

"Oh, right," said the detective. "I guess you don't know New York. But if you've got a grudge against this scheme we'll try the other one. It's a sure thing. But if you don't like it, you may as well never mind the expense," said Meeks; "we'll try it."

The sleuth led him back to the Waldorf. "Engage a couple of bedrooms and a parlor," he advised, "and let's go up."

This was done, and the two were shown to a superb suite on the fourth floor. Meeks looked at the room with a mixture of velvet armchair, and pulled out his cigar case.

"I forgot to suggest, old man," he said, "that you don't have to pay the rent by the month. They wouldn't have stuck you so much for 'em."

"By the month?" exclaimed Meeks. "What do you mean by the month? I told you it would cost you more. We'll have to wait till spring. There'll be a new city directory out then. We'll have your sister's name and address in it."

Meeks rld himself of the city detective at once. On the next day some of the most famous private detectives, who demanded fabulous fees, but performed miracles in the way of solving mysterious cases, were waiting for two hours in the anteroom of the great detective's apartment. Meeks was shown into his presence. John the famous sleuth, with a keen, piercing eye, and a rate per word are too well known to need description.

Meeks set forth his errand. "My fee, if successful, is five hundred dollars," said Shamrock Jones.

Meeks bowed his agreement to the price.

"I will undertake your case, Mr. Meeks," said Jones, finally. "The disappearance of people in this city has always been an interesting problem to me. I remember a case that I brought to a success last outcome a year ago. A family bearing the name of Clark disappeared suddenly from a small flat in which they were living. I watched the flat building for two months for a clue. One day it struck me that a certain milkman and a grocer's boy always walked backward when they passed the hall and changed their name to Kralc."

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At the end of half an hour Jones had collected a few seemingly unintelligible articles—a cheap black hat pin, a piece torn off a theater program and the end of a small torn card on which was the word "left" and the characters "C 12."

Shamrock Jones leaned against the mantel for ten minutes, with his head resting upon his hand, and an absorbed look upon his intellectual face. At the end of that time he exclaimed, with animation:

"Come, Mr. Meeks; the problem is solved. I can take you directly to the house where your sister is living. And you may have no fears concerning her welfare, for she is amply provided with funds—for the present at least."

"How did you manage it?" he asked with admiration in his tones.

"Perhaps Jones' only weakness was a professional pride in his wonderful achievements in induction. He was ever ready to assume and charm his listeners by describing his methods."

"By elimination," said Jones, spreading his clues upon a little table. "I got rid of certain parts of the case to which Mrs. Snyder might have removed. You see this hatpin? That eliminates Brooklyn. No woman attempts to board a car at the Brooklyn Bridge without being sure that she carries a hatpin with which to fight her way into a seat. And now I will demonstrate to you that she could not have gone to Harlem."

"My sister is in the wall. Upon one of these Mrs. Snyder has hung her bonnet, and upon the other her shawl."

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Shamrock Jones and his client went to the tenement house where Mary Snyder had lived, and the detective demanded to be shown the room in which she had lived. It had been occupied by no tenant since her disappearance.

The room was small, dingy, and furnished. Meeks seated himself dejectedly on a broken chair, while the great detective

Now, was there ever a case where a middle-aged woman, wearing a shawl, boarded a Harlem train without there being a friend in the shawl to catch in the gate and delay the passengers behind her? So we eliminate Harlem.

"Therefore I conclude that Mrs. Snyder has not moved very far away. On this point of case you see the word 'left,' the letter 'C' and the number '12.'"

Now, I happen to know that No. 12 Avenue C is a first-class boarding house, far beyond your sister's means—as we suppose. But then I find this piece of a theater program, crumpled into an odd shape. What meaning does it convey? None to you, very likely. Mr. Meeks; but it is eloquent to one whose habits and training take cognizance of the smallest things.

"You have told me that your sister was a scrubwoman. She scrubbed the floors of offices and hallways. Let us assume that she procured such work to perform in a theater. Wherever a valuable jewelry lost the offense, Mr. Meeks? Look at that piece of program. Mr. Meeks observe the round impression in it. It has been wrapped around a ring—perhaps a ring of great value. Mrs. Snyder found the ring while at work in the theater. She hastily wrapped the piece of program around it, and thrust it into her bosom. The next day she disposed of it, and with her increased means looked about her for a more comfortable place in which to live. When I reach thus far in the chain I see nothing impossible about No. 12 Avenue C. It is there we will find your sister, Mr. Meeks."

Shamrock Jones concluded his convincing speech with the smile of a successful artist. Meeks' admiration was too great for words. Together they went to No. 12 Avenue C. It was an old-fashioned brownstone house in a prosperous and respectable neighborhood.

They rang the bell, and on inquiring were told that no Mrs. Snyder was known there, and that not within six months had a new occupant come to the house.

When they reached the sidewalk again, Meeks examined the clues which he had brought away from his sister's old room.

"I am no detective," he remarked to Jones as he raised the piece of theater program to his nose, "but it seems to me that instead of a ring having been wrapped in this paper it was one of those round peppermint drops. And this piece with the address on it looks to me like the end of a seat coupon—No. 12, row C, left aisle."

Shamrock Jones had a far-away look in his eyes.

"I think you would do well to consult Juggins," said he.

"Who is Juggins?" asked Meeks.

"He is the leader," said Jones, "of a new modern school of detectives. Their methods are different from ours, but it is said that Juggins has solved some extremely puzzling cases. I will take you to him."

They found the greater Juggins in the office of a small man with light hair, deeply absorbed in reading one of the bourgeois works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The two great detectives of different schools shook hands with ceremony, and Meeks was introduced.

"State the facts," said Juggins, going on with his reading.

When Meeks ceased, the greater one closed his book and said: "Do I understand that your sister is fifty-two years of age, with

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a large mole on the side of her nose, and that she is a very poor widow, making a scanty living by scrubbing, and with a very homely face and figure?"

"That describes her exactly," admitted Meeks. Juggins rose and put on his hat.

"In fifteen minutes," he said, "I will return, bringing you her present address."

Shamrock Jones turned pale, but forced a smile.

Within the specified time Juggins returned and consulted a little slip of paper held in his hand.

"Your sister, Mary Snyder," he announced calmly, "will be found at No. 162 Chilton street. She is living in the back hall bedroom; five flights up. The house is only four blocks from here." He continued, addressing Meeks, "Suppose you go and verify the statement and then return here. Mr. Jones will wait you. I dare say Meeks hurried away. In twenty minutes he was back again, with a beaming face.

"She is there and well!" he cried. "Name your fee."

"Two dollars," said Juggins.

When Meeks had settled his bill and departed, Shamrock Jones stood with his hat in his hand before Juggins.

"If it would not be asking too much," he stammered—"if you would favor me so far—would you object to my—"

"Certainly not," said Juggins pleasantly. "I will tell you how I did it. You remember the description of Mrs. Snyder? Did you ever know a woman like that who wasn't paying weekly installments on an enlarged crayon portrait of herself? The biggest factory of that kind in the country is just around the corner. I went there and got her address from the books. That's all."

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## SONS HONOR

## CAPITAL MAN

O. A. C. Oehmler Made Commander of Maryland U. S. A. Organization.

O. A. C. Oehmler, of Washington, was elected division commander of the Maryland division of the Sons of Veterans U. S. A., which closed its annual encampment here yesterday afternoon at the Ebbitt Hotel.

Other officers chosen by the division include F. A. DeGroot, Washington, senior vice commander; George W. Mace, Hagerstown, Md., junior vice commander; Francis E. Cross, Washington, secretary and treasurer; E. F. Warner, Washington; D. A. Carrick, Baltimore; and F. E. Gentile, Wilmington, Del., members of the division council, and Samuel L. Zinn, Grafton, Va., and John E. Bond, Washington, members of the division council.

The Maryland division is composed of the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Delaware.

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## Society

By E. C. DRUM-HUNT.

The Argentine Ambassador, Dr. Tomas A. Le Breton, returned from New York Monday, where he had been with Mme. Le Breton, and left that evening for San Francisco, where he will attend the Democratic national convention, accompanied by Hector Ayerza, attache of the embassy.

Mme. Le Breton secured passage earlier than she expected and sailed for Europe yesterday on the S. S. Leopoldina, with her niece, Miss Manuela Lloveras and Miss Clementina Bartolucci-Dundas, sister of the late Lieut. Luigi Bartolucci-Dundas, of the Italian embassy, who was Miss Lloveras' fiancé. Miss Lloveras, after attending the obsequies of Lieut. Bartolucci, will pay a visit of condolence to his parents, Mme. Le Breton and her niece will spend the greater part of the summer in Switzerland and Spain.

The British Ambassador, Sir Auckland Geddes, accompanied by H. V. Tennant, of the embassy staff, will return to Washington tomorrow after an absence of several days. He delivered an address at the commencement exercises of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology last evening and will go to New Haven today, to receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Yale University, at the commencement exercises there today.

Mr. and Mrs. John Walker Holcombe and Miss Eugenia Holcombe will sail shortly for Europe.

Col. T. Q. Donaldson returned yesterday from a short trip to Philadelphia.

Mr. and Mrs. Halloway, who lives at Wardsman Park Hotel, entertained at dinner there Monday evening in compliment to Lieut. Gen. Hunter Liggett, who was in Washington for a few days. He left Tuesday for California, accompanied by his aide, Lieut. Richard Derby. Among the guests at the dinner were Mr. and Mrs. Trent, Miss Elizabeth Wamsley and her guest, Miss Maristean, of New York, Lieut. McKirdy, Lieut. Derby and several others.

Mrs. Lawrence Townsend will leave the first week in July to visit Miss Margaret Corlies at Magnolia, Mass.

Brig. Gen. and Mrs. William Crozier, who are in New York at the Regatta, are planning a trip around the world and will sail July 14.

Mr. and Mrs. Warwick Emile Montgomery have closed their house at Rhode Island and have gone to their country place in Maryland for the summer. Miss Anna Montgomery will later visit friends at New London.

The marriage of Mrs. Beale Sessions Baldwin, daughter of Mr. Benjamin Reeves Russell to Zamor Briggs, applied to Philadelphia, took place at 8 o'clock last evening at the home of Col. and Mrs. Russell, the Rev. Dr. Charles Wood officiating. Only members of the two families were present at the ceremony, which was followed by an informal reception.

The bride was given in marriage by her step-father, Col. Russell, and was attended by her sister, Miss Alle Sessions, as maid of honor. Her two half-sisters, Miss Lora Haddock Russell, and Miss Emily Reeves Russell, were bridesmaids. Wayne Walton, of Philadelphia, was best man.

The bridegroom's parents, Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Applegate, of Philadelphia, were among the town guests here for the wedding. After a wedding trip Mr. Applegate and his bride will make their home in Philadelphia.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Hodgkin announce the marriage of their daughter, Kathryn, to Lieut. Paul V. Thompson, U. S. N., on Saturday, June 25. After an extensive trip through the North they will reside in Cleveland, Ohio.

Senator Key Pittman left for San Francisco, where he will attend the Democratic National Convention.

The marriage of Miss Ethel Louise Dunbar, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel L. Dunbar, to Lloyd Clayton Walker, took place yesterday, the Rev. Lewis E. Purdon officiating. The bride's gown of white georgette was exquisitely fashioned. Immediately following the ceremony a trip through New England and the Adirondacks, the latter wearing a smart-blue traveling suit with fuchsia hat to match.

Mrs. James Carroll Fraser, who returned last week from Chicago,

where she spent convention week, will sail about July 1 for a visit to Europe.

Mr. and Mrs. Sterling Price Taylor are spending a short time in Washington as the guest of her brother and sister-in-law, Lieut. Commander and Mrs. J. W. Bagby, on her way home from Randolph-Macon College, Lynchburg, Va., to New Haven, Mo. Miss Bagby is a sister also of Lieut. Ralph Bagby, whose engagement to Miss Anne Elizabeth Robertson was recently announced.

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## HOPES OF BONUS

## NOW IN FRISCO

Soldiers' Envoys to Ask Compensation Plank at San Francisco.

Falling to obtain a plank in the Republican platform providing bonus for former soldiers, representatives of the American Legion are now turning to the Democratic convention in San Francisco for endorsement of the measure which passed the House and is now on the Senate calendar.

The representatives of the legion in Washington, who were most active in obtaining action on bonus legislation, are now pinning their faith in the Democratic party; on William C. Fowler, of the Stars and Stripes, who is chairman of the delegation from the State of Washington.

Bryan is urging that the Democratic coalition get its record as favoring a bonus for soldiers, according to a statement yesterday.

Representatives of the legion are hoping Bryan or Jones will be made a member of the resolutions committee in San Francisco to carry on the fight for a bonus.

(Public Ledger Service.)

## 'NEAR SOCIETY'

## FACING BLOCK

Ruling of St. James Court Worries Prospective Tourists.